

**TIPPECANOE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
**REGULAR MEETING**  
**February 20, 2007**

The Tippecanoe County Commissioners met on Tuesday, February 20, 2007 at 10:00 a. m. in the Tippecanoe Room in the County Office Building. Commissioners present were: President KD Benson, Vice President John L. Knochel, and Member Ruth E. Shedd. Also present were: Auditor Jennifer Weston, Commissioners' Assistant Frank Cederquist, County Attorney David W. Luhman, and Secretary Jennifer Prange.

President Benson called the meeting to order and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- Commissioner Knochel made a motion to approve minutes of the February 5, 2007 meeting as distributed, seconded by Commissioner Shedd; motion carried.

**ACCOUNTS PAYABLE**

Commissioners' Assistant Frank Cederquist presented the accounts payable vouchers. Approval is requested for vouchers filed February 8, 9, 15, 16 and 20 with two exceptions. Mr. Cederquist noted that a voucher was received for \$49.99 for a coffee pot from Teresa Luttrell and a \$59.98 voucher from Cindy Houseman for two space heaters.

- Commissioner Shedd moved to approve claims as presented with exceptions, seconded by Commissioner Knochel; motion carried.

**SNOW EMERGENCY DECLARATION**

Commissioner Benson declared a snow emergency on February 13, 2007. Attorney Luhman noted that this emergency was called at 12:00 p. m. by the Commission's president on February 13, 2007. He added that a copy has been filed with the Tippecanoe County clerk, auditor and also with clerks in incorporated towns.

- Commissioner Knochel moved to ratify local disaster emergency proclamation, seconded by Commissioner Shedd; motion carried.

**HIGHWAY: Opal Kuhl**

Director Kuhl presented an IDEM agreement for Bridge #153 located at CR 900 E and Sugar Creek. Director Kuhl noted that the highway department has been working jointly on a design with INDOT and Purdue for this fiber reinforced bridge. She indicated that federal funds have been received for this project and it is required by IDEM that the county sign an agreement. Director Kuhl stated that this agreement states that Tippecanoe County will abide by all IDEM rules and will be responsible for maintaining the environment, erosion control, proper clean-up and abide by all general construction rules.

- Commissioner Knochel moved to approve the IDEM agreement for Bridge #153, seconded by Commissioner Shedd; motion carried.

Director Kuhl presented a warranty deed for County Project 300 West and US 52 for Intersection Improvements. She added that this piece of property was the last piece the county needed to acquire for this project. The property is in the name of Edward H. Lockart and is \$59,000.

- Commissioner Knochel moved to accept the warranty deed as presented, seconded by Commissioner Shedd; motion carried.

***ASSESSORS: Samantha Steele***

County Assessor Samantha Steele presented information to the commissioners regarding trending bids. Assessor Steele is requesting that the County Commissioners reject all bids received in order to rewrite the specifications for trending. She added that information was received from previous employers of GnA stating they have signed a non-compete contract and she believes they should not be working in Tippecanoe County. Additionally, Assessor Steele believes that a portion of the work could be performed by her office in an effort to save money and re-write the specifications for trending. Commissioner Knochel stated that he was expecting the County Assessor to provide the commissioners with the amount to be requested for additional appropriations from county council in March. Assessor Steele noted that she has not requested additional appropriations at this time. She referenced Indiana statute 6-1.1-4-14, that states elected township assessors and trustee assessors hold the right to vote and hire the company with the majority of the votes for trending. County Attorney Dave Luhman noted that statute 6-1.1-4-17 states during general reassessment the majority of assessors may vote to employ a professional appraiser. He added that during annual adjustments any township assessor or any county assessor may employ technical advisor.

Township Trustee Assessor Bill Jones presented information regarding trending. Mr. Jones stated that he believes the trending process was unsuccessful last year. He added that he was disappointed that township trustee assessors were not involved in last years trending. Mr. Jones mentioned that commercial and industrial buildings were assessed incorrectly as well as agricultural buildings. He stated that agricultural buildings in his township were assessed as residential property, leaving them with an 18% increase. Mr. Jones supports the County Assessor in her decision to hire Nexus Group.

Fairfield Township Assessor Jan Payne stated that she was pleased with the work completed by Al Jordan and Ginny Whipple in 2006. She noted that they were knowledgeable, easy to work with and adjusted well to the county's computer system. Assessor Payne's concern is the deadline for the county, she noted that if this issue is not resolved in a timely manner all work in the assessors offices will be delayed for the entire year. She added that neighborhood delineation was problematic last year and is hopeful that this year will be more successful. Wabash Township Assessor Janet Freels added that the trending process is new and problems are to be expected. Assessor Freels also agreed that GnA was knowledgeable and helpful, and believes they are qualified to complete the trending in 2007. Commissioner Knochel questioned Assessor Payne and Assessor Freels regarding issues brought forth by Mr. Jones. Assessor Payne noted that commercial sales are limited in the area; thus leading to undervalued assessments. In closing, Assessor Freels noted that these bids were made in good faith and GnA should rightfully be awarded the contract.

Thomas Hudgel, taxpayer, spoke regarding the trending process. Mr. Hudgel believes that GnA has started the job and should continue in 2007. He doesn't feel that it is in the county's best interest to hire a lesser known, more expensive company that has to start the process from the beginning. Mr. Hudgel noted that GnA has experience in Tippecanoe County and presented the lowest bid, therefore should be awarded the contract. He added that hiring GnA to perform the trending will save the county \$77,000 and he believes this money would be better spent in other areas in Tippecanoe County.

Terry Masterson, taxpayer, also commented on the trending process. Mr. Masterson claims that the process has been performed poorly in the past and supports the county assessors' decision to hire a more expensive company. Mr. Masterson noted that he owns several properties in Tippecanoe County which were over-assessed; he asked the commissioners to consider using another company in an effort to reach true market value and more precise property assessments.

Thomas Kessler, taxpayer, commented on trending. Mr. Kessler noted that he did not have enough information about trending to understand the whole process and hoped that more information would be available on trending in the future. He supports the idea of trending to market value but is concerned about the increase in his property value.

Al Jordan spoke on behalf of GnA Assessment Professionals. Mr. Jordan stated that between himself and Ginny Whipple they have 38 years experience in the property tax field. Mr. Jordan mentioned that Tippecanoe County has many challenges to include the database and GIS system. He noted that there was a problem with the county assessor and the township trustee assessor's in the past. Mr. Jordan realized this issue was out their control, but they operated as obligated by contract. He noted that Appraisal Research Corporation and GnA have signed a non-compete contract and ARC has agreed not to practice in Tippecanoe County. Mr. Jordan stated that he would like to work in Tippecanoe County and looks forward to working with the township assessors and trustee assessors to get the job done.

Heather Maddox, taxpayer, spoke in regards to trending. She noted that this issue has been very public and believes that the all parties involved should come to an agreement, work together and take the next step. Ms. Maddox believes that all entities relying on these tax dollars would appreciate the county forging ahead to resolve this issue.

Commissioner Knochel reiterated the fact that all parties involved need to work together for the taxpayers of Tippecanoe County. He mentioned that the assessing process is the root where county government financing begins and anticipates this being resolved as soon as possible.

Commissioner Shedd agreed with Commissioner Knochel and noted that the county needs to move forward. She would like to see the county award one of the bids received in an effort to resolve this problem. Commissioner Knochel noted that he is unwilling to reject the bids along as is Commissioner Shedd. Commissioner Benson stated that the commissioners want the best service for taxpayers with the least cost.

***RECORDER: Oneta Tolle***

Recorder Oneta Tolle presented bulk copy agreements to the commissioners for Metropolitan Title, Stallard and Schuh and FMDS-IDM Corporation. She added that legislation is in the process of changing the copy fee amount to \$.10 a copy. Attorney Luhman noted that these contracts have a 30 day cancellation notice and if needed could be suspended and re-written with the new rate.

- Commissioner Knochel moved to approve these agreements for Metropolitan Title, Stallard and Schuh, and FMDS-IDM Corporation, seconded by Commissioner Shedd; motion carried.

***YOUTH SERVICES UPDATE: Rebecca Humphrey***

Currently Director Rebecca Humphrey is meeting with county service providers, reviewing standards of care, outcomes, budget expenditures and projected budgets. Director Humphrey added that she will be reporting on or before April 1, 2007 to the commissioners, expenditures regarding youth and overall statistics. Also, she will provide an overview of youth services or gap in youth services in Tippecanoe County on or before June 29, 2007. By September 28, 2007 Director Humphrey will provide an overview of standards, those that are meeting the standards, what the standards should be as well as outcomes and monitoring compliance with those standards and outcomes. In March, Director Humphrey is planning community forums aimed at different focus groups regarding youth services in Tippecanoe County. Director Humphrey is currently working on preliminary site selection for a juvenile facility in Tippecanoe County.

***PURDUE UNIVERSITY AND TIPPECANOE COUNTY CONTRACT: Bryan Metzger***

Cooperative Extension Director Bryan Metzger presented a contract for extension educator services between Purdue University and Tippecanoe County. Director Metzger noted that this agreement is the same as last year's agreement with a different contractual amount. Also, he added in 2007 there will be five educators instead of four and payments will be made in two installments.

- Commissioner Knochel moved to approve the contract as presented; seconded by Commissioner Shedd; motion carried.

***SKATE PARK/SOAPBOX DERBY PARK: Dan Altepeter***

Dan Altepeter discussed briefly the opportunity to build a Skate/Soap Box Derby Park. Mr. Altepeter stated youth involved in Soap Box Derby includes both boys and girls from ages 7-16. He added that Soap Box Derby has been around for a number of years in Indiana. Mr. Altepeter hopes to build a track on South 18<sup>th</sup> Street next to Wea Ridge Elementary and Middle Schools. In the past, members have set up a track on city streets that were closed for the event and he noted that this was time consuming and very labor intensive. Mr. Altepeter stated that building the track in Tippecanoe County could possibly attract visitors from across Indiana to participate in a variety of events. He added that this is a great family sport that involves both parents and children. Long-term plans include a skate park and toboggan run. Lastly, he noted that this project will be totally funded by private donations. Commissioner Benson requested that Attorney Luhman create a resolution for the park and present at the next meeting.

***WABASH RIVER PARKWAY COMMISSION DISSOLUTION – WABASH RIVER ENHANCEMENT COMMISSION***

Commissioner Benson noted that the Wabash River Parkway Commission Officers approached the Wabash River Enhancement Commission in an effort to combine the agencies. Attorney Luhman mentioned that the original agreement was established 20 years ago and may have included both cities. If this is the case, the existing parkway commission would need to be dissolved by resolution. Attorney Luhman stated another resolution would need to be created to incorporate the Wabash River Enhancement commission.

***ADOPTION OF 2007 EDIT CUM CAP PLAN: Frank Cederquist***

Commissioners Assistant Frank Cederquist presented the 2007 Cumulative Capital Improvement Tax Plan and the Economic Development Income Tax Plan as recommended to county council in the 2007 budget hearings. Assistant Cederquist noted that these resolutions are established yearly. Attorney Luhman stated that EDIT Fund Resolution 2007-03-CM amends project 10 and provides additional funding for several existing projects in the amount of \$534,000.

- Commissioner Knochel moved to approve Resolution 2007-03-CM as summarized, seconded by Commissioner Shedd; motion carried.

Attorney Luhman presented 2007-04-CM which amends the Cumulative Capital Improvement Tax Plan. This resolution adds new project XX which provides funding for capital outlay expenditures in 2007 as approved by county council in the amount of \$2,370,635. An attached exhibit includes a list of capital items for each department in the county.

- Commissioner Knochel moved to approve Resolution 2007-04-CM, seconded by Commissioner Shedd, motion carried.

***APPOINTMENT TO COMMON WAGE BOARD***

- Mark Miller - Tippecanoe County Bridge Replacement Project
- Dave Lahr - Tippecanoe County Bridge Project
- Betty Michael - Tippecanoe County Bridge Project  
- Tippecanoe County School Corporation

***APPOINTMENT TO PROPERTY TAX ASSESSMENT BOARD OF APPEALS***

Commissioner Benson stated that these appointments will be postponed until the county council appoints its members.

***UNFINISHED/NEW BUSINESS***

Assistant Frank Cederquist presented an agreement for approval for the Tippecanoe Villa. This agreement is between Tippecanoe Villa and Lafayette Copier for \$.0199 per copy.

- Commissioner Knochel moved to approve the agreement for Tippecanoe Villa, seconded by Commissioner Shedd; motion carried.

***REPORTS ON FILE***

Tippecanoe County Public Library

***PUBLIC COMMENT***

None

- Commissioner Knochel moved to adjourn.

**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF  
THE COUNTY OF TIPPECANOE**

---

KD Benson, President

---

John L. Knochel, Vice President

---

Ruth E. Shedd, Member

**ATTEST:**

---

Jennifer Weston, Auditor